

Free, Not Baby Talk, Screen Is What Wanger Demands

Producer Makes Eloquent Plea for Ideal In Talk Before Variety Club on What's Wrong With Films and the Business

By JAY CARMODY.

For years, Walter Wanger has been unable to understand why the press, the radio, and the guy on the soap box should enjoy complete freedom of speech while the movies were limited to baby talk. Now, in the face of a national emergency, during which he feels the movies could be the most potent of fog-dispelling agencies, he understands it less than ever.

Playing a sort of sophisticated Wanger confessed his bafflement in sturdy, pointed terms here yesterday. He did it on two occasions, first to an audience of about 100 (sic) newspapermen in his suite at the Carlton; later to a local showman assembled at Variety Club's luncheon at the Willard.

A producer of pictures which must have ideas before anything else, including stars, Wanger frankly carries a chip on his shoulder for any one in the group which classes all idea pictures as propaganda. Using "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" as a case in point, he struck out with a defense of Frank Capra's film here as a Senator who "at least was not like Rush Holt and Robert Reynolds." (Seated at his right, and the recipient of a courteous bow from the speaker, was Senator Henry F. Ashurst, who introduced Wanger at the Variety meeting.)

Little patience has Wanger, too, with the attitude of those who move the business that the public needs "escapist" entertainment. The attitude that calls for such films, he says, is precisely the one that makes victory simple for tyranny. "Unwittingly," he declares, "people who encourage the notion that there is room for no other kind of picture are serving as a kind of fifth columnist."

For a parallel, Wanger cited the case of Japan's puppet State, Manchukuo.

"There," he says, "the Japanese are encouraging the sale of dope to the natives, thus to enable them to give the illusion of the good life. Escapist movies, as a formula, serve the same purpose here."

The producer whose "Foreign Correspondent" is currently one of the most talked of films in the country, is convinced that America needs to redefine many of its standard terms.

One of them is "independent" as applied specifically to motion picture producers. As an independent and the producer of pictures which suggest thinking to an audience as they provide entertainment to that audience, Wanger knows all the accusations which fall to the lot of such pioneers. Fiercely dem-

ocratic, far more so than his traders, he has heard himself called all the undemocratic names in the book.

"If, for instance, I make a picture intimating that we could make our system work more effectively," he says, "I'm accused of everything all the way to being against capitalism. It's one of the big studios, backed, of course, by the powerful banking institutions, makes the same kind of picture. It's quite all right. One of the best things, I think, that has happened to the industry was the production of 'Grapes of Wrath.' Zanuck, 20th Century-Fox and the backing banks could do that. I could not have."

"The only ones who can be safely independent, therefore, are the great studios, to whom the word as generally used does not apply."

Wanger, who will be in Washington for several days, is convinced the movies can be an indispensable agency of help in awakening America from the apathy which has held it since the World War.

"You can't preserve the American tradition merely by passing a \$10,000,000,000 defense bill and a conscription act," he told his Variety audience. "That can be done only by defining the American tradition and making it the most important thing in the individual's life. The radio can do much, but it is limited in its influence to the homes of those who have radio sets. The press can do much, but it also is circumscribed. The movies can do more than either if they can be freed from the accusation of propaganda every time they are written around an idea."

Bulletin board: "East Lynne" will require a third week at the Roadside to dispose of the public interest in it. . . . The third week will be the one beginning Monday. . . . Eileen Rittner, Earle's sing-a-song girl, fully recovered from that appendectomy, will be back at her microphone Friday. . . . The songs, incidentally, will be Dixie in flavor, a sound idea in view of the screen attraction, "The Howards of Virginia." . . . June Forrest, Earle's vocal star from Friday to next Thursday, will arrive here tomorrow. . . . It's to make an appearance on the "Dreams Come True" program, Station WRC.

AMUSEMENTS.

Palace—"Boom Town," excitement in the oil fields, with Gable, Tracy, Colbert and Lamarr: 11:05 a.m., 1:45, 4:20, 7 and 9:40 p.m.

Earle—"He Stayed for Breakfast," Loretta Young and Melvyn Douglas kid Communism: 9:45 a.m., 12:10, 2:35, 5, 7:30 and 10 p.m. Stage shows: 11:15 a.m., 1:45, 4:10, 6:40 and 9:05 p.m.

Metropolitan—"They Drive by Night," and find excitement hauling produce: 11:15 a.m., 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:40 and 9:45 p.m.

Columbia—"I Love You Again," Myrna Loy and William Powell in a gay romantic comedy: 11 a.m., 1:05, 3:10, 5:20, 7:25 and 9:35 p.m.

Little—"Mayerling," Boyer meets Darrieux: 11 a.m., 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:35 and 9:45 p.m.

Trans-Lux—News and shorts; continuous from 10 a.m.

In the Country, Cross-Roads—"Smilin' Through," revival of the well-known sentimental play: 8:40 p.m.

Roadside—"East Lynne," the popular melodrama group in a rare and notable tear-jerker: 8:40 p.m.



COLLEEN ARRIVES—Friday morning, that is, Maureen O'Hara will arrive in town, along with Lucille Ball, for a day of festivity coincident with the opening at Keith's of their new starring picture, "Dance, Girl, Dance."

Where and When Current Theater Attractions and Time of Showing

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Fredric March Is One Star Who'll Use a Stunt Man

'Not for a Million Dollars' He Says Of Leap From Top of Sound Stage For Big Scene in 'Flotsam'

By SHEILAH GRAHAM.

Frances Dee has been dying for two days on the "Flotsam" set. And the nurse is just about to pronounce her truly gone, when Frances has a bit of the giggles. Time out while Frances composes her features.

Miss Dee (Mrs. Joel McCrea in private life) plays the wife of Fredric March, who is a political refugee from Germany in the middle 1930's. One of the scenes shows him in Paris with Margaret Sullivan, another fugitive from the Nazis, and some one says, "Thank God, we'll always have France to give us shelter!"

Fredric hears that his wife is dying in Munich, and he goes back, knowing he will be caught and sentenced to death. He is now saying good-bye to her, with the Gestapo, in the shape of Erich von Stroheim.

Instead of waiting for trial, Fredric grabs Von Stroheim and with him plunges to death from a seven-story window.

"I suppose you'll do that scene yourself?" I ask Mr. March, with a straight face. "Not for a million dollars," says Fredric fervently. "Come here, and I'll show you how high the jump is." He takes me outside. The jump will start from the top of the sound stage. Two stunt men will make the leap for \$500 each per leap. They will fall into a thin, but strong (they hope), net near the ground. The net has

to be low because of the long-range camera. I hope the boys are well insured!

A brief peep into the "Kitty Foyle" set at R-K-O finds Dennis Morgan making love to Ginger Rogers via the dictaphone in his office. Ginger's hair is still fairly dark—though not black as in "Lucky Partners." It is now the color of Loretta Young's. This was as far as Greta would go to lighten her locks.

"I have some lovely love scenes with Ginger," gloats Dennis Morgan. Here's how he sums up Miss Rogers: "She knows what she's about. No wavering like so many of the others in Hollywood."

The picture is still minus one leading man, but Morgan jeers at the theory of a shortage of Hollywood males. "I know 20 men who'd be good for the part—if they got the chance," he tells me. "Any man can get a contract. That's easy. They'll sign you up at the drop of a request. No, the hard thing is getting some pictures to do. Success in Hollywood," he concludes, "is just a question of luck." Morgan is 30 years old, but looks younger, is married, has two small children—

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CALVERT 23rd St. & N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
CENTRAL 425 9th St. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
KENNEDY Kennedy, Near 4th N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
PENN 550 Pa. Ave. S.E. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
SHERIDAN Ga. Ave. & Sheridan. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
SILVER 8th & Park Rd. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
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UPTOWN Conn. Ave. & Newark. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
APOLLO 625 H St. N.E. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
AVON 6212 Conn. Ave. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
COLONY 4935 Ga. Ave. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
HOME 1230 C St. N.E. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
SAVOY 3030 14th St. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
SECO 834 Ga. Ave. Silver Spring. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
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YORK Ga. Ave. & Quebec St. N.W. Mat. 1 P. M. Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, "He Stayed for Breakfast" At 1:35, 3:35, 5:35, 7:35, 9:35.
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